



# **HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION OF ELLIJAY, GEORGIA**



## **DESIGN POLICIES AND GUIDELINES**

**Adopted AUGUST 2008**

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## **I. PROLOGUE/MISSION STATEMENT**

Architectural review or design guidelines are an important component of any community's image and should be intended to encourage orderly, creative and compatible development and redesign within the city. The following guidelines are tailored for use within the City of Ellijay (and are intended as guidelines only.)

The objectives or mission of these Design Guidelines include:

- Preserving the historic integrity of the City
- Protecting public and private investments
- Helping to maintain the "sense of place" that distinguishes Ellijay and its environment
- Promoting sensitive, compatible and appropriate renovations and new development to contribute to an existing well-established architectural heritage

## **ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF DESIGN GUIDELINES**

A study by the University of Georgia demonstrated that historic preservation in cities was "good business". It concluded that a city's historic preservation ethic has quantifiable economic and fiscal impact on a community, contributing financially as well as aesthetically to the overall downtown area. Property values increase in those communities who invest in the preservation of their heritage and image as much as 80 percent in some cases.

## **DESIGNATED HISTORIC DISTRICT DEFINED:**

The area affected by these guidelines will be defined as follows: all commercial, residential and industrial buildings within the designated Historic District as defined by the official map (see Appendix A: HPC Map #6).

## **II. EXAMPLES OF ARCHITECTURAL STYLES FOUND IN THE CITY OF ELLIJAY**



## **III. ELEMENTS OF DESIGN**

### **SETBACK, MASS AND RHYTHM**

There are several ideas that should govern the visual relationship between an infill building and its neighbors:

- **SETBACK** The setback found in downtown Ellijay is generally at the lot line or sidewalk line.
- **PROPORTIONS OF THE FAÇADE** A downtown building should reflect the characteristic rhythm of facades along the street by filling its entire space. If the site is large, the mass of the façade can be broken into a number of smaller bays to maintain a rhythm similar to the surrounding buildings.
- **COMPOSITION** The composition of a façade (the organization of its parts) should be similar to that of surrounding facades. Rhythms that carry throughout the block (such as window spacing) should be incorporated into the new façade.
- **PROPORTIONS OF THE OPENINGS** The size and proportion of window and door openings of downtown buildings should be similar to those on surrounding facades. The same applies to the ratio of window area to solid wall for the façade as a whole.



## **BUILDING MATERIALS**

The primary materials used in the commercial district are brick and stone of different colors, types, and textures. The color and texture of the building materials should be simple and unobtrusive:

- The storefront frame can be wood, cast iron or anodized aluminum.
- The display windows should be clear glass.
- Transom windows can be clear, tinted, or stained glass.
- The entrance door should have a large glass panel and can be made of wood, steel or painted aluminum.
- The bulkheads can be made of wood, cast iron or sheet metal or sometimes the horizontal supporting beam can serve as the supporting cap.
- The side piers should be the same material as the upper story.

Certain materials and design elements should never be used on a traditional commercial building: a mansard roof with wooden shingles, rough textured wood siding, fake bricks or stone and gravel aggregate materials are not appropriate. Horizontal lap siding, wood or synthetic, is not recommended (in most cases) in the commercial district. Existing exterior materials should not be covered by a modern replacement. Vinyl, aluminum or other synthetic siding is not recommended. The covering of buildings with stucco or synthetic stucco surfaces is discouraged. Do not add non-historic or inappropriate ornamental features to a building.

### **Maintenance:**

- Exterior materials should be maintained and preserved.
- Replacements should match the original elements in size, shape and other visual characteristics.

#### **IV. DESIGN GUIDELINES**

##### **STANDARDS FOR REHABILITATION**

These Design Guidelines apply to exterior changes to buildings within the Historic Preservation District. Interior changes, paint colors or maintenance repairs do not require approval. The property owner must meet with the Ellijay City Code Enforcement Officer and submit a project plan along with an Application for a Certificate of Appropriateness in order to obtain a Certificate of Appropriateness from the Historic Preservation Commission. The standards are summarized in part here:

1. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or the alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.
2. Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings shall not be undertaken.
3. Most properties change over time: those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.
4. Distinctive features, finishes and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize the property shall be preserved.
5. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities, and where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary physical or pictorial evidence.
6. Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.
7. Significant archeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.
8. New additions, exterior alterations or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.

9. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

## **FOUNDATIONS**

Georgia's historic commercial buildings, especially brick buildings, often had cellars for storage. Therefore, some of the commercial buildings found downtown have basement levels.

### **Maintenance**

- To protect foundations, sills and framing, foundations and basements need to be kept dry. If proper slope and drainage do not keep water away from the foundation, gutters and downspouts should be installed.
- Basement walls need to be kept in good repair and poured wall and floor junctures need to be kept sealed
- Ventilation is essential to prevent dry out to a building's wooden structural members.

## **COMMERCIAL FACADES**

Commercial facades in downtown Ellijay are typically two stories in height and their design relates directly to the scale of the pedestrian. Traditional storefronts were designed to provide a large area for the display of merchandise, thereby encouraging window shopping. Storefronts found in downtown Ellijay usually consist of display and transom windows, an entry door, bulkheads, and a signboard area framed by structural members. The basic configuration can often be derived from old photographs of the building.

The basic commercial façade consists of three parts: the storefront with an entrance and display windows, the upper façade usually with regularly spaced windows, and the cornice that caps the building. These components appear in many shapes, sizes and styles, but result in essentially the same façade.

## **BULKHEADS**

Bulkheads provide a base for the storefronts and protect the display windows from damage. They also help to establish horizontal rhythm to the overall downtown appearance. More modern storefront designs eliminate or decrease the size of bulkheads which is not only inappropriate for the design of historic buildings, but also destroys the proportional relationship of the storefront.

### **Recommendations:**

- **Preserve, maintain or restore (uncover) bulkheads or kickplates where they exist(ed), matching the original in design, size and material.**
- **Do not remove, conceal or alter**
- **For renovations with no documentary evidence, appropriate bulkhead materials are: painted woods, glazed tile, or painted metal in muted colors.**
- **Align bulkheads and kickplates with those of other buildings in the block.**



**Bulkhead**



### **DISPLAY WINDOWS**

**A common characteristic of historic storefronts in downtown Ellijay is the large display windows which not only allow light into many of the interior spaces, but also showcase merchandise found inside.**

#### **Guidelines:**

- **The number, arrangement, size, style glazing pattern, shape and proportions of original or architecturally significant storefront windows and their surrounds should be retained or restored when possible.**

- Replacement storefront windows made of aluminum or other metal finishes (not including brass, stainless steel, or decorative metal finishes) should be painted to match or coordinate with the color of the storefront area.
- Display windows should fill their original openings.
- Clear plate or tempered glass should be used for the display window.
- The use of partial curtains, blinds or display cases in the storefront window will create additional privacy without changing the character of the storefront.

## **TRANSOM WINDOWS**

Located above the display windows and doors, transom windows contribute to the openness of the storefront façade. Transom windows were originally designed to allow as much natural light as possible into the interior of the store for illumination.

Sometimes transom windows are blocked to hide renovations which lowered the height of the ceiling to accommodate air conditioning or heating ducts. Recessing the dropped ceiling away from the transom and display windows a minimum of one and a half feet will preserve the openness of transoms and the display area and still accommodate modern conveniences.

### **Guidelines:**

- Check for a transom above a display window. If found, uncover and restore it.
- The number, arrangement, size and style, glazing pattern, shape and proportions of original or architecturally significant transoms and their surrounds should be retained or restored where possible.
- Transom windows should fill their original openings.
- Historic transom materials such as prism or leaded glass should be retained and repaired when possible. If the original transom glass is removed, use clear, frosted or darkened glass in its place of the original cannot be feasibly duplicated.



**Transom Windows**



## **ENTRANCES, DOORS AND ACCESS**

Commercial buildings have storefront entrances which are typically recessed to provide a larger area for display, give shelter from the elements, and emphasize the entrances. Tall, single or double doors, built of wood with large areas of glass (at least 50 percent) that maintain the transparency of the storefront were historically used in storefront designs and are still visible in the downtown Ellijay area.

Changes in regulations may require alterations for access and egress. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires that all government and commercial buildings provide barrier free access. However, some historic buildings may be exempt from this requirement. The fulfillment of this requirement must be balanced with the goal of preserving the historic integrity of the building.

### **Guidelines:**

- Do not enclose, cover or alter entrance.
- Replacement doors that are metal (not including brass, stainless steel, or decorative finishes) should be painted to match or coordinate with the door surrounds and entrance.
- Doors and their surrounds should be recessed slightly from the plane in which they are located.
- New door openings should be located on a secondary side or rear façade when possible.
- Retain the original door hardware whenever possible. Dead bolt locks should be installed above or below the original hardware.
- Avoid using doors with mirrored or tinted glass (does not include colored or stained decorative glass).
- Do not use “fake historic” doors, solid wood or metal doors, or doors that are decorated with moldings, cross bucks or window grills -- these doors are residential in nature and are incompatible with the design of the historic façade.
- Avoid installing a storm or security door whose size, color, material and texture are incompatible with the original door and door opening.

### **Door Replacement:**

If a door is to be replaced there are three basic options:

- Have a new door built with the same design and proportions of the original.
- Find a manufactured wooden or steel door that resembles the traditional store door.
- Use a standard aluminum commercial door with wide stiles and a brick anodized or baked enamel finish.

## **INSTITUTIONAL ENTRANCES AND DOORS**

The entrances of these buildings are often heavily ornamented. Double doors are common because of the number of people using the building. For the same reason, the front façade may have multiple entrances. Doors often relate stylistically to the rest of the building.

- Entrances should not be added or removed. Retention of the original doors is important.

## **INSTITUTIONAL ACCESS**

The use of symmetrical front facades and elevated entrances on many of these buildings makes the front difficult to adapt for access without impairing integrity. Attempts should be made to provide a second entrance on a side or rear elevation.

- Side or rear access is preferred provided the entrance is not a service entrance. Where a barrier free access addition to the front is necessary, every attempt should be made to maintain the symmetry and architectural detail.

## **AWNINGS AND CANOPIES**

The use of awnings in downtown Ellijay is functionally and historically appropriate. Awnings provide shade and protection for pedestrians, reduce glare into the building and can be used to visually identify a business. Awnings can also serve to hide inappropriate alterations. A standard street-level awning should be mounted so that the valance is about eight feet above the sidewalk and projects out between four and seven feet from the building. A twelve inch valance flap is usually attached at the awning bar and can be used as a sign panel.

Fixed Canopies are currently found on some of the historic buildings in downtown Ellijay. The canopy is usually supported by a metal frame and attached to the building façade by diagonal tie-rods or chains.

### **Guidelines:**

- The awning or canopy should fit within the storefront, window or door to which it is being attached.
- Storefront awnings and canopies should be placed above either the display window and below the transom windows, or above the display and transom windows but below the signboard area.

- When attaching the awning to the building, avoid damaging or covering historic building materials or features. Try to align bottom of awning with awnings on adjacent buildings.
- Do not use plastic, wooden shingle, metal or back-lit awnings. If a flat canopy exists, it can be dressed up with a 12 to 24 inch awning valance.
- Water runoff from awnings or canopies should be anticipated and planned for accordingly.



## UPPER WINDOWS

Typically, windows in the upper façade of a building are placed symmetrically, creating a visual rhythm relating to the location of the storefront divisions or window areas at the street level. Most of the windows used in the upper facades of the buildings in downtown Ellijay are rectangular in shape, oriented vertically, are double hung, one-over-one sash in single, paired or banked arrangements. However, there are examples of decorative semi-circular windows, multi-paned windows, and steel framed windows. Window surrounds are wood and metal and usually simple in design with a stone and/or brick sill and lintel. Some have an ornamental lintel, pediment or spandrel design in another material distinguishing certain windows from others on the façade. Often, deteriorated upper-story windows have been inappropriately replaced or boarded up. This treatment damages the character of the building and streetscape as well as creates a negative image that can be avoided through proper maintenance.

### Guidelines:

- Preserve, maintain, or restore original windows, including proportions and spacing of openings, dimensions, sash, materials and details.
- Do not enclose, cover or alter. Open boarded or bricked windows.
- If original window design is unknown, use window type and detailing of the architectural style and period of the building. Replacement windows that are

aluminum or metal (preferably anodized and of a dark color) should be finished to match the window frame or surround.

- Glazing or window glass should be clear unless colored, stained or another glass was historically used.
- When storm windows are used to improve thermal performance, they should resemble the existing windows as closely as possible in shape, size and appearance, and be painted or finished to match the window to which it is attached. Consider using interior storm windows to avoid compromising the historic character of the façade.
- Avoid trying to create false or earlier architectural styles.
- Do not add shutters unless based on physical or photographic evidence that shutters existed. If replacing missing shutters, use shutters to fit the window opening so that if closed, the opening would be covered.

## **INSTITUTIONAL WINDOWS**

Institutional buildings use windows to create a feeling of importance and reverence, or to enhance architectural style. Secular buildings frequently place larger, more elaborate windows on the first floor and near the entrance. Religious structures often use stained glass.

### **Guidelines:**

- Sash windows should not be replaced with fixed windows. Replacement glass should match the original in appearance.

## **WALL DETAIL AND CORNICE**

Wall detail and decoration enhance character and give buildings a distinct identity. The level of detail and decoration varies from one building to the next in downtown Ellijay. Caps, pilasters, columns, roof pediments, etc. have historically been made of six materials: masonry, cast iron, pressed tin, wood, terra cotta, and decorative glass. Detailing and decoration is most often located on the street level of a commercial building and the façade area directly below the cornice or cap. Detailing is also found around some of the windows on the upper façade.

The cornice caps of the building, visually as well as physically, can be an integral part of the building or can be a separate attachment. The cornice also protects the roof and wall junction from water penetration. The style, decoration, and materials of the cornice differ from one building to the next. The cornice may be a simple brick band or a highly detailed pressed tin projecting over the building façade.

### **Guidelines:**

- Original wall detail and cornice should not be removed. Replacement of missing detail should be based upon duplication of the original.
- Sagging wall details and decorations should be carefully re-anchored using recommended preservation methods to avoid damaging historic details, decoration or wall materials.

## **SIGNAGE**

Signs play an important role in the attractiveness and the appearance of the district. Excessive size, quantity and information on a building façade can create visual clutter which not only detracts from the street environment and the building's character, but also makes it more difficult for a potential customer to identify the location of the business. Signs should be the appropriate size in relationship to the scale of the storefront window, building and street.

The property or business owner should note this section regarding signage has two parts:

1. the recommendations for signage appropriate to the downtown Ellijay district; and
2. a summary of the City's Sign Ordinance regulations for the C-2 district (downtown) (Appendix A)

### **General Signage Guidelines:**

- A sign should express an easy to read, direct message: keep it simple.
- Letter styles should be chosen that are easy to read and reflect the image of the business it represents.
- A storefront should not have more than two signs- one primary and one secondary.
- Signs should not cover or obscure any existing detail or element and should be compatible with the architecture of the building.
- The suggested square foot sign area for a single building façade should not exceed two times the linear street frontage of the building.
- Illuminated signs can be appropriate downtown if they respect the proportions of the storefront and the guidelines outlined above. Painted signs can be directly illuminated with fluorescent or incandescent lights. Internally lit signs are most effective with light letters on a dark opaque background. Exposed neon letters can also be effective, adding color and vitality to the street.

### **Applied or flush-mounted sign guidelines:**

- A flush-mounted sign board may extend the width of the storefront but should not be more than 2 ½ feet high. Generally, lettering should be 8 to 18 inches high and occupy only about 65 percent of the sign board.

- The flush-mounted sign should be located directly above the storefront, and not extend above the first floor. Flush-mounted signs should allow ornamentation and architectural features to remain visible.

### **Projecting Signs**

- Hanging signs should be mounted perpendicular to the building façade on the lower level or base of a structure.



### **Display Window Signs**

- Window signs should not obscure the display area, and should not occupy more than 15 percent of the total glass area on which they are displayed. The color of the letters should contrast with the display background.

### **Signs on Awnings and Canopies**

- Lettering and/or graphics should not occupy more than 65 percent of the surface plane on which it is applied.
- Signs on awnings should be silk-screened or sewn on to the awning fabric.

## **Appendix A**

### **City of Ellijay Sign Ordinance**

#### **COLOR**

Painting can be one of the most dramatic improvements you make to your building. Choosing the right combination of colors can unify the building elements within the façade

as well as relate the building to others on the street. Three colors are sufficient to highlight any façade.

The base color appears on the upper wall and piers flanking the storefront. Often this color will be natural brick and will not require paint. If the building has been painted, a color should be selected that relates to the surrounding buildings.

The major trim color defines the decorative elements of the building, tying together the upper façade trim and the storefront. The trim color should complement the base color. If there is a natural stone or terra-cotta trim on the façade, it should serve as a trim color. Major trim elements include the building cornice, storefront cornice, window frames, sills and hoods, storefront frame, columns and bulkheads (including aluminum framing).

The minor trim color should enhance the color scheme established by the base and major trim. Often a darker shade of the major trim can be used to highlight the window sashes, doors and selective cornice and bulkhead details. Care should be taken not to over decorate the façade.

Color can also be used to minimize façade problems visually. A poorly patched and repainted wall is not as noticeable when it is painted; a missing upper cornice can be recreated with a one dimensional paint scheme; and inappropriate materials can be made more compatible with paint color.

**Guideline:**

- Do not paint previously unpainted masonry surfaces.

## **NEW OR INFILL CONSTRUCTION**

The construction of new buildings on downtown vacant lots is encouraged. The design of a new building should reflect the period of its construction (not a reproduction or copy of an old style.) However, the new construction should be compatible to adjacent buildings in scale, height, materials, shape orientation, rhythm and proportion of openings, texture and placement. These guidelines are concerned primarily with exterior appearances, and therefore do not seek to limit construction techniques or materials used in construction of the interior.

**Guidelines:**

- New construction should be similar to and compatible with adjacent buildings (maintain established rhythms and patterns and not stick out among them.)
- New or infill construction should be aligned with existing setbacks and spacing. The setback found in downtown Ellijay is generally at the lot line or sidewalk line.

- New or infill construction should be of similar height, width, scale, and proportions to adjacent buildings.
- New or infill construction should be of orientation to the street and with roof shape, roof pitch, and foundation height consistent with adjacent buildings.
- New or infill façade construction should be of similar materials and colors (not imitative of features copied from historic styles).
- Infill architecture should reflect some of the detailing of surrounding buildings in window shapes, cornice lines and brick work.

## **REAR ENTRANCES**

Rear entrances are also visually important spaces in the downtown area. By improving the appearances and developing rear entrances, the rear façade can serve for more than just deliveries. A rear entrance can provide direct customer access to your store from the parking lots and the street. Before beginning work on a rear entrance, be sure to look for important historic elements (columns, brick decoration, etc.) that should be preserved.

### **Guidelines:**

- Upper story windows should be uncovered to restore the rear of the building.
- Air conditioning units should be relocated off of the public right-of-way to the roof of the building.
- Obsolete exterior fixtures (old gutters, wiring) should be removed.
- Exterior steps or loading docks should be recessed into the building to remove them from the public right-of-way.



## **DEMOLITION BY NEGLECT**

Neglect of historic buildings is hazardous and detrimental to the individual property and the surrounding area or district. Because property owners are legally responsible for providing ordinary maintenance and repair, neglect should be avoided.



**The City of Ellijay Building Inspector is required by law through the Southern Standard Housing Code to inspect properties to determine if they are being allowed to deteriorate through neglect. Neglect includes conditions such as the deterioration of a building's structural system or exterior architectural features and broken windows, doors and openings, which allow entry of vermin and the elements.**

**When neglect occurs and poses a health, safety or welfare to the general public, the Building Inspector must notify the owner, who has sixty (60) days to remedy the situation without penalty.**

**Guidelines:**

- **Neglect of historic buildings should be avoided.**
- **Property owners should provide ordinary maintenance and repair of structures.**
- **Historic properties are to be monitored for neglect.**
- **Neglect should result in legal penalties.**



**Historic Courthouse Demolished Due to Neglect in 2007**

## **DEMOLITION**

**The demolition of historic buildings diminishes the built environment and creates unnecessary waste. Demolition of historic buildings should be avoided whenever possible. When a historic building is demolished rather than reused, everyone pays an economic cost.**

**If a demolition is unavoidable, every effort should be made to mitigate the loss. Options include locating a buyer who might have an alternative use for the building or relocating the building to another site. If all efforts have failed, buildings of particular significance should be carefully photographed and documented prior to demolition. Special architectural features and ornamentation can be saved and incorporated into the design of the replacement structure.**

The Historic Preservation Commission in reviewing applications for demolitions or relocations shall not grant a Certificate of Appropriateness without reviewing at the same time replacement plans for the site. The Historic Preservation Commission will hear evidence at its public hearing and may approve the application and issue a Certificate of Appropriateness only if one of the following conditions is determined to exist:

1. The application is for the demolition or relocation of a main non-contributing building or structure, a portion of a main non-contributing building or structure, or a non-significant building or structure secondary to the main non-contributing building or structure, and the approval of the application will not have a substantial adverse effect on the aesthetic, historic or architectural significance of the district.
2. The application is for the demolition or relocation of a non-significant addition to or portion of a main contributing building or structure or for a non-significant building or structure secondary to the main contributing building or structure, and the approval of the application will not have a substantial adverse effect on the aesthetic, historic, architectural or archaeological significance of the district.
3. The application is for the demolition or relocation of a local historic property or a contributing or noncontributing building, the demolition or relocation of which would have a substantial adverse effect on the local historic property, but the replacement project is of special merit. For a replacement project to be of special merit, it must meet the following criteria:
  - It must have significant benefits to the Historic District or the community by virtue of exemplary architecture, specific features of land planning, or social or other benefits having a high priority for community services; and
  - It must clearly serve the public interest to a greater extent than the retention of the present building(s).

**Guidelines:**

- Demolition of historic buildings should be avoided.
- An application for demolition shall be accompanied by a complete plan for the new development proposed on the site, a timetable, a budget both the demolition and new construction, and satisfactory evidence that adequate financing is available.
- When demolition is unavoidable, every effort should be made to mitigate the negative impact.

**MAINTENANCE, CLEANING AND REPAIR**

Ordinary maintenance and repair can be granted a special waiver, and therefore does not require a Certificate of Appropriateness. Call the City Code Enforcement Officer at 706/635-4711, ext. 2, to define your project.

**Guidelines:**

- Regularly inspect the exterior building surfaces to detect potentially harmful conditions.
- Masonry surfaces and mortar joints should be checked for signs of white streaking (efflorescence). Re-pointing may be required.
- Peeling, mildewing, cracking, disintegrating paint, insect damage, warping, deterioration of caulking and wood decay are some of the warning signs to look for on wood surfaces.
- Buildings should have properly installed drainage systems in good working condition which expel water onto surfaces that slope away from the building at ground level.
- Repairs should be limited to affected areas, be sensitive to historic materials, and utilize matching materials.
- Never sandblast to clean or remove paint from buildings.
- For building surfaces that are currently painted, maintain the surface to protect the material beneath.